



SCOUTING AND FREEMASONRY: creating local connections

Scouting and Freemasonry share many features in common, from the same traditional values to similar future challenges. Over the last few years the two organisations have supported each other in a number of ways and at all levels. This resource is designed to assist members of both Scouting and Freemasonry to engage and support each other locally.

Why?

Both Scouting and Freemasonry share similar values. The principles within the Scout Promise also feature at the heart of Masonic teaching. Both organisations are concerned with helping members to become better people and have remarkably similar moral codes. They are both open to people of all faiths and both encourage good citizenship and self-development. As membership organisations,

they also face the same challenges; building better informed public awareness, attracting and retaining new members, focusing resources where they can have the biggest impact and operating in a manner that provides the best support to their membership. As local organisations found in or near to most communities, it makes sense that Scouting and Freemasonry co-operate and support each other where they can.

What is Scouting and how is it organised?

Scouting was founded in 1907 by Robert Baden-Powell, whose publication "Scouting for Boys" inspired boys in Edwardian England to group together into patrols and venture into the outdoors. Over a hundred years later nearly half a million young people experience everyday adventure through Scouting. No longer a boys' organisation, around 25% of the 6-25 year old youth members are girls. They are supported by 162,000 adult leaders and supporters. Both youth and adult membership is growing but demand is increasing faster than Scouting can recruit Leaders, despite the fact that 61,000 new adults joined over the last 5 years.

In England and Wales Scouting is organised into Counties and Areas, aligned broadly to civic boundaries. They are managed by a volunteer County or Area Commissioner who appoints a team of specialists to

support him or her. Each County / Area is made up of a number of Districts, led by a District Commissioner with their own team, whose role it is to support and develop Scouting in their area. Scouting itself happens in community based Scout Groups, a number of Groups making up each Scout District. Each Scout Group is led by a Group Scout Leader and will comprise youth sections; Beaver Scout Colonies for 6-8 year olds, Cub Scout Packs for 8-10 ½ year olds and Scout Troops for 10 ½ to 14 year olds. Districts also have Explorer Scout Units for 14 to 18 year olds and every County / Area has Scout Networks for 18 to 25 year olds. Every Scout Group is a charitable organisation in its own right and has to support itself by raising funds. They do this by forming Group Executive Committees to administer Group affairs, leaving Scout Leaders to concentrate on the youth programme.

What is Freemasonry and how is it organised?

Freemasonry in England and Wales is governed by the United Grand Lodge of England (UGLE), which dates back to 1717. The current membership stands at around 200,000 men grouped in 8,000 local Lodges. Scotland has its own Grand Lodge, the Grand Lodge of Scotland, as does Ireland, the Grand Lodge of Ireland. There are also two Grand Lodges for women; the Order of Women Freemasons and the Honourable Fraternity of Ancient Freemasons.

UGLE is led by the Grand Master, HRH The Duke of Kent, who is also the President of the Scout Association. He is supported by a team of Grand Officers and a staff managed by the Grand Secretary. The country is divided into Masonic Provinces, each led by a Provincial Grand Master who himself will have a team of officers to assist him. There are Lodges in most large towns and many smaller communities. They meet either in Masonic Halls (which tend to accommodate a number of local Lodges) or on community premises. Each Lodge is led by a

Worshipful Master, who is elected for one year, while other officers manage administrative, financial, charitable and other functions. Many Freemasons were once Scouts, or members of other organised youth organisations. In almost every County / Province there is a Lodge made up of Freemasons who have a particular interest in Scouting and these Lodges are all members of the Kindred Lodges Association or KLA.

In the last few years Freemasons have been made very much aware of Scouting as it is today, largely through the UGLE sponsored 2012 Prestonian Lecture, "Scouting & Freemasonry: two parallel organisations?". There is a very strong willingness to support Scouting with time, money and facilities. Masonic charities have donated over £1,000,000 to Scouting in the last ten years, including a £500,000 grant from The Freemasons' Grand Charity and £261,000 from the Royal Masonic Trust for Girls & Boys. There are many examples of donations being made by Lodges to Scouting at a local level.

What are the opportunities for co-operation?

County / Area Commissioners and Provincial Grand Masters have broadly similar roles and will operate within similar geographical boundaries. Freemasonry does not have an equivalent to Scout Districts, although in many large Provinces there are local structures that perform a similar function.

Scout Groups and Masonic Lodges are the two organisations' community based units. The opportunities for communication and co-operation lie largely between, first, Scout Counties and Masonic Provinces and secondly between Scout Groups and Masonic Lodges.

What can Scouting and Freemasonry offer each other?

Scouting has grown significantly since 2003. This has been as a result of a transformational change process that reviewed and altered the way the organisation operates while retaining its core values and purpose. Freemasonry can learn a lot from Scouting's experience. Indeed, since 2008 senior members of both organisations have met regularly to share lessons and ideas. The opportunity now exists for Masonic Provinces to connect with Scout Counties / Areas to learn how Scouting has developed within the same part of the country.

Freemasonry includes among its members people with hugely diverse skills and talents, including trades skills such as electricians, plumbers, car mechanics and builders, and professional skills, such as accounting, marketing & communications, training and management / administration. Freemasons may be approached to serve as officers on Group, District and County / Area Executives or to be specialist Advisers, badge examiners and fund raisers. In addition, Masonic Halls normally seek outside lettings from community and other groups and would be suitable for committee meetings, training sessions and conferences.

How do we make contact?

To contact your local Masonic Province, look it up on <http://www.ugle.org.uk/about/provinces> and get in touch with the Provincial Grand Secretary. Explain your purpose and whether you are a Scout County / Area wishing to connect with the Province itself or a Scout Group wishing to connect with a Lodge in your area. Scout Districts are advised to coordinate an approach with their Scout County / Area.

To contact local Scouting, enter "Scouts <name of county or town>" into a search engine. Once on the appropriate website, use the "Contact us", "Find a Group" or similar function to find the person you wish to contact. For Provinces wishing to connect with the Scout County or Area, this would be either the County / Area Commissioner or the County / Area Secretary. For Lodges wishing to connect with a local Scout Group, this would be the Group Scout Leader.

Tony Harvey, who is the KLA's liaison between The Scout Association and the United Grand Lodge of England, as well as UGLE's 2012 Prestonian Lecturer on Scouting & Freemasonry, will always be able to assist and can be contacted on tony.harvey@prestonian2012.org.uk

Links

The Scout Association

United Grand Lodge of England

Grand Lodge of Scotland

Grand Lodge of Ireland

Order of Women Freemasons

Honourable Fraternity of Ancient Freemasons

Kindred Lodges Association

<http://scouts.org.uk>

<http://www.ugle.org.uk>

<http://www.grandlodgescotland.com>

<http://freemason.ie>

<https://www.owf.org.uk>

<http://www.hfaf.org>

<http://www.kindredlodges.org.uk>

